



**Interfaith Forum of  
Muslim & Christian Women's  
Association**

*(a.k.a Women's Interfaith Council)*

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## **Seminar on United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325**

Held in Kaduna on April 16, 2013

# Communiqué

### **Introduction:**

The need for women's participation in peacemaking and peacekeeping has been recognized by the international community through United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325. This Resolution calls on U.N. member states, all parties to armed conflict and other civil society actors to ensure a gender perspective in conflict prevention, peacekeeping, conflict resolution and peace building. Among other priorities, it seeks to ensure the equal and full participation of women in all peace processes, and attention to the special needs of women and girls in post-conflict recovery.

The Interfaith Forum of Muslim and Christian Women's Associations (a.k.a. Women's Interfaith Council) is very much aware of the urgent need to find ways to better implement this Resolution in Nigeria. To this effect, on Tuesday the 16th April 2013, the Women's Interfaith Council hosted a seminar on the theme: UN Security Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. The Seminar was held in the Women's Multipurpose Centre, Kaduna.

The Seminar provided an opportunity for the voice of women and the voice of the top security agencies to meet, as they seldom do, and to share ideas and perspectives on how women of faith in Kaduna might be more involved in security measures (planning and implementation) in line with UNSCR 1325.

The following Observations and Recommendations were made:

### **Observations:**

- 1) Nigeria is a very diverse country and is not exempt from conflicts and these conflicts always manifest along sectarian lines such as religion and ethnicity;
- 2) Globally, the nature of conflicts has fast changed into a very complicated trajectory with civilians now being more primarily targeted, leaving women and children more highly and devastatingly impacted;
- 3) The north of Nigeria is presently bedevilled by a very dangerous level of insecurity that has threatened almost all aspects of its socio-political and economic life, thus deepening the cycle of violence and its impact especially on women and children;
- 4) World over, all people suffer vulnerability as a result of all manner of violence. Women, and children are always the most hard hit, but they can be, and very often are, agents of security and instruments of peace in many different ways, not least by influencing their children and people around them positively;
- 5) Nigeria is a signatory to UNSCR1325 and, therefore, is obligated to abide by the Resolution, which underscores the need for all Nigerians, especially women, to know its cardinal principles and for Nigeria to operationalize same;
- 6) Nigeria, regrettably, is only now working on her National Action Plan, thirteen years after the adoption of the Resolution – better late than never! The states, as it were, are yet to start work on their respective State Action Plans;

- 7) In Nigeria, women are very much marginalized from matters of peace building, security and conflict prevention in spite of their demonstrated ability to manage crisis in the home and the immediate society. Where they are even considered, their contributions are undervalued and underutilized. This may be due to a poor understanding of the concept of conflict prevention, peace building and security;
- 8) Women are capable of playing critical and pivotal roles, as underscored in UNSCR1325, in conflict prevention, peace building and security;
- 9) While women seek more representation in the process, they also realize the critical difference between representation and effective participation; they therefore note, with a high degree of concern, the poor lot of women educationally, economically, and socio-politically in Nigeria, especially the north;
- 10) There is a critical lack of sufficient and effective structures to address issues of violence against women (VAW) and other gender based violence (GBV) such as the right laws, courts, rehabilitation facilities and well trained personnel to assist in coping with attendant traumas;
- 11) Relief interventions, whether in internally displaced persons' camp or otherwise, do not yet adequately cater for the special concerns of women and children, and also Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs);
- 12) Abuse of drugs and the lack of good structures to productively engage youth and also provide employment in the Nigerian society contribute greatly in the participation of youth in violence and other vices;
- 13) Failure of the Nigerian state to live by the rule of law has engendered the conflicts and insecurity experienced in the country today;
- 14) The problem of insecurity of Nigeria will only be solved by dialogue and negotiation; no problem is unsolvable. There is the ever-increasing need to know each other better and to work together and more closely;
- 15) Nigeria's borders are mortally porous and immigration measures are next to non-existent, thereby allowing persons of questionable character and motives go about without due check.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 1) Compliance to the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria should be the basic precondition that provides the right framework for the operationalisation of UNSCR1325. Thus, rule of law must be seen to be vigorously pursued;
- 2) All states of the federation should respectively develop their State Action Plans, adapting from the National Action Plan, to reflect their realities and peculiarities. This should be done with the full representation and participation of women;
- 3) Drug abuse is a critical factor in violent conflicts; therefore, drug programs should be mainstreamed in the Action Plans at national and state levels;
- 4) Sexually Transmitted Infections programming should be mainstreamed in the National/State Actions Plans being developed;

### **Justice and Healing**

- 5) Stringent laws should be enacted to cover gender based offenses within and outside the context of crises situations;
- 6) Perpetrators of gender based violence (GBV) must be prosecuted according to the laws of the land;
- 7) A robust transitional justice program should be developed in Nigeria and special courts for the prosecution of violence against women (VAW) during and after conflicts should be established;
- 8) Collaboration between CSOs, security and law enforcement agencies should be fostered in the prosecution of VAW;

- 9) Justice and truth commissions are needed to help in the process of healing and reintegration after the violent conflicts that have ridden the nation;
- 10) There is need also to explore our traditional African alternatives to justice and conflict resolution;

### **Women in the Security Process**

- 11) Women should be better represented in the security and law enforcement agencies in Nigeria so as to better mainstream gender thereby responding more effectively to such concerns should they arise;
- 12) On a constant and continuous basis, early warning and early response (EWER) mechanisms should be installed and appropriate trainings be carried out for citizens, especially women and youth;
- 13) Women must be allowed at all times to speak for themselves particularly on issues that affect them;
- 14) Girl-child education must be vigorously pursued if women are to engage more effectively in security matters as captured in the UNSCR 1325;
- 15) Women must be ICT savvy not just so as to cope with the demands of the 21st century, but also to be able to access relevant resource material to be able to participate effectively in matters that affect them, especially, in this case, security and peace building;
- 16) Early marriage is a factor that has to be addressed for women, especially in northern Nigeria, to be able to attain a sufficient level of education so as to participate effectively. This must be pursued with sensitivity to and within the context of diversities such as religion and culture;
- 17) Because women need to participate in policy making, they necessarily must also occupy such position. Therefore women must work to contest and win elections. They must also work to achieve a reasonable degree of economic power;
- 18) Women must work, even at the family level, to fight against corruption and injustice which have been identified as major factors that lead to conflict in Nigeria. This intervention, though remote, is critical to conflict prevention and peace building;
- 19) Effective border policing and immigration laws and policies should be pursued, so as to keep tab of immigrants and their activities in the country, as a means to strategy insecurity in the country.

### **Conclusion**

The UNSCR 1325 is a comprehensive political framework within which women's protection and their role in peace processes can be addressed. This Resolution deserves to be known and implemented in Nigeria at large and in Kaduna state in particular, so that the security of women and girls is ensured during conflicts and so that women more actively and directly participate in conflict prevention and peacebuilding as well as in post-conflict efforts.

Women's faith groups appreciate the opportunity provided by this Seminar to grow in awareness of the issues involved and to dialogue with the Security Agencies on these very pertinent issues. Our faiths, Islam and Christianity, impel us to be committed as instruments of reconciliation, peace, and security in our land and today we renew our commitment to this responsibility. The observations and recommendations expressed in this communiqué will be our guide as we collaborate with the Security Agencies and other leaders in our society to build a better Nigeria for our children, as Women of Faith, Working together as Mothers of a Culture of Peace.

*Signed on behalf of the participants:*

Rev. Sr. Kathleen McGarvey OLA  
*General Coordinator*

Mrs. Comfort Fearon  
*Christian Coordinator*

Hajiya Amina Kazaure  
*Muslim Coordinator*